

News Release



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Crystal Cove Historic District Cottages Transition to State Parks

CRYSTAL COVE - The California State Department of Parks and Recreation announced today that as of July 8, 2001, the department has accepted the transition of the historic cottages at Crystal Cove into the park system from the residents who have rented the cottages. This step moves State Parks one step closer to restoration of the historic district and the opening of the park to public access.

"For the residents who have enjoyed this unique and beautiful place for so many years, this is a sad occasion and the end of what has been a wonderful era for them," said State Parks Director Rusty Areias. "But at the same time," added Areias, "we are now at the threshold of a wonderful new era that will now include public access to facilities not available to the public before."

It is the intention of the State Department of Parks and Recreation to immediately take steps to preserve and protect the cottages from deterioration. It is a job that State Parks is well qualified to do and has been doing for nearly 100 years. State Parks now oversees the preservation and protection of 46 State Historic Parks and one State Historic Monument, Hearst Castle, cited as the best national monument in the United States by Conde Naste Magazine. The State Historic Parks includes everything from single houses to entire towns, and includes such places as Columbia State Historic Park, Fort Tejon State Historic Park, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and Will Rogers State Historic Park.

In February of this year, the State Department of Parks and Recreation terminated a contract with a private developer for what had been described as a high-end resort proposal for the Crystal Cove Historic District. In the same month, the Crystal Cove Residents Association and the State Department of Parks and Recreation signed an agreement in which the residents agreed to voluntarily vacate the cottages by July 8, 2001. That agreement eliminated the need for an eviction process.

California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>

“Public access to the historic district begins today,” said Crystal Cove State Park Superintendent Don Ito. “And we welcome the public to have a look. But at the same time, “ said Ito, “we want the public to know that the cottages are fragile and we do not want a curious public to do unintentional harm. Therefore, we will be asking for public help to protect the cottages, and we will be taking additional steps, as we move forward with the plans for preservation and public use.”

Steps to be taken by State Parks to preserve the protect the cottages are as follows:

- Some of the cottages may be cordoned off to protect various parts of the cottages and the grounds around them.
- Some of the trails around the cottages may be closed as a public safety measure, since some walkways and stairways are unsafe for use.
- State Park peace officers and other personnel will be moving into several of the cottages to provide a continuous presence to protect and preserve the surroundings.
- A private security firm has been hired to provide additional 24-hour security, seven days a week.
- A public entrance kiosk and gate will be installed near the entrance to the historic district to regulate vehicle traffic in and out of the district. The hours will be the same as other such facilities, 6 AM to sunset.
- There will be no public parking in the historic district, except for handicapped parking. Parking will be allowed in the Los Trancos parking lot on the inland side of the Pacific Coast Highway and access will be through the tunnel to the historic district. However, the drop-off of equipment and people will be allowed, with vehicles then returned to the Los Trancos lot.

As soon as the cottages are vacated, State Parks intends to begin a detailed internal assessment of the cottages, which has never been done before. It will include an assessment of the architecture, design and items of special significance for preservation, as well as an examination of hazardous materials, such as lead based paints and asbestos in roofing materials. In addition, State Parks intends to abandon the in-ground septic tank system and install a temporary system, above ground, during the time that the cottages are occupied by park personnel. This step will eliminate any future threat of contamination to the creek and surrounding environment.

State Parks is in the process of gathering public input on how the Historic District is to be restored and opened to the public. One public hearing has been held and two more are being planned. From the public process, a shared vision will emerge that represents the highest public values and uses for this unique place. If the shared vision contains changes from the 1982 General Plan, it is the intention of State Parks to present them to the State Parks and Recreation Commission in February of 2002. That means implementation of restoration plans could begin next year. # # #

Additional Contact or for tours today, call:

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(949) 497-1582

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